Volume 6, Edition 1

Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club WIRELESS

January 2002

Welcome to the New Year!

This edition of the Wireless welcomes Sonoma Valley amateur radio operators to another year filled with opportunity and purpose.

Our opportunity is to reach out to the members of our community and offer them the chance to share in our fascinating and enjoyable hobby.

The leadership of VOMARC has been talking about the best ways to accomplish the goal of increasing membership in VOMARC as well as in amateur radio overall. It apparent that our hobby has even more competition for interest in this burgeoning technology of a modern age. The internet, cell phones and interactive computer games fill the time and demand the resources that were previously devoted to amateur radio. The question then becomes, “What does amateur radio offer that these other interests can’t?”

Many amateurs have been at their personal level of comfort for so long that they haven’t considered the changes the modern world have had on their hobby. They have assumed for too long that their share of the radio spectrum is an entitlement instead of a valuable and coveted resource that other interests look toward with profit instead of recreation as the driving motive.

The purpose of VOMARC that its members now must consider is the recruitment of new members to share the hobby as well as to become allies in the increasingly intense competition for radio spectrum.

How can VOMARC successfully accomplish this goal and make it specific enough for practical planning? First, we must identify people who can be effectively approached and informed about the hobby and who are likely to respond to initial overtures and follow up with participation in licensing classes and testing. Approaching larger groups will be more efficient and make best use of our limited resources. Service clubs, SIRS, local teachers and students have been suggested as possible candidates. What groups or organizations do each of you belong to that could be exposed to recruitment? Give your suggestions to your officers and join in the planning for contacting the other members of your groups.

The next step will to be to thoroughly plan our presentation so to generate the greatest possible interest. Most likely, we will have only one shot with each group, so standing in front of them and “winging it” just won’t do.

Right now VOMARC is planning a license class starting mid-February and winding up just before the April hamfest.

VOMARC’s last big membership increase came during the classes held in the early 90’s. The club has a golden opportunity to bring in some fresh talent and enthusiasm.

The one thing we fell down on after the last wave of license classes and new hams was

"Elmering" them enough to get them comfortable operating on the radio on their own. As they say in business, the job's not over until the paperwork's done. VOMARC has had a regular corps of instructors, but we need to also build a core group of members who are willing to help the new hams get an antenna into the air and get them on the air.

This year VOMARC can concentrate on revitalizing our membership to keep the club healthy and strong. The regular activities, such as the hamfest and Field Day, can be our basis for engaging and involving new members. With a little extra effort by the current VOMARC membership, our activities can grow to make this hobby even more enjoyable for years to come. Yer Editor

FROM THE TOP OF THE HILL

First, I would like to send my wishes to you and your families for a joyous and prosperous New Year.

Even as the nation has had its ups and downs this last year, so has VOMARC. I would ask that all of you do your part is making this year of 2002 a successful one for our club.

Our Jan meeting will focus on fixing the events for the year. Our next ham class will start on Feb. 19th, so if you would like to help teach, let me or Darrel (WD6BOR) know. Even if you don't want to teach, your presence at the classes is valuable to give individual help to the students. Talk it up among your friends. There are a lot of retirees out there that might find our hobby a worthwhile pursuit. Also, try to recruit our young people as well. It's a sad fact that our club's future depends on getting new members.

As I write this, I am thinking about Ken (N6KM) and Pat (KE6LNN) and my wishes for a fun trip to Italy and a safe return.

You probably know that our frequencies are under a constant threat of being taken or forcing us to share them. The ARRL is doing all it can to keep this from happening. If you don't belong to the ARRL, please consider joining. It's only through this organization, that our bands will be safe. If you are a member, contributions to the 2002 fund for the Defense of Amateur Radio Frequencies could make a big difference. The league is working hard to get the 40 meter band amateur radio only throughout the world as well as finding new frequencies in the H.F. spectrum. Our biggest threat is from commercial interests who want our UHF frequencies. We are facing big dollars and its going to be a tough battle, so please help if you can. If nothing else, get on the air whenever possible. If you hear someone id on a repeater, answer and have a QSO. Let's keep our bands active.

Our Christmas party was a huge success. Thanks to Steve Todd (K2IYQ) and John (W6TWQ) for putting it together.

We have been throwing around the idea of expanding our Hamfest to include local crafts. If you would like to be on a committee to pursue this idea, please let me know. Remember that our Hamfest is our major fundraiser for the year. The more people we attract, the more breakfasts we can sell.
Hope to see you all at the next meeting, Jan 16th.
73, Jim

ARRL STUDY PANEL RECOMMENDS ELIMINATING NOVICE BANDS

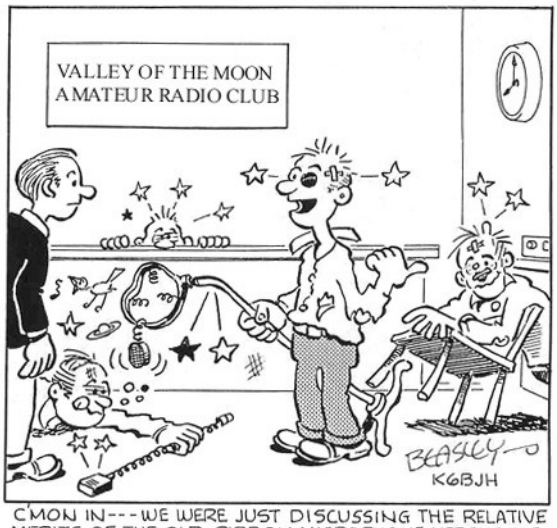
On the basis of nearly 5000 survey responses, the ARRL Novice Spectrum Study Committee has recommended that the ARRL petition the FCC to eliminate the Novice CW sub-bands and allow Novice and Technician with Element 1 credit licensees to operate CW on the General 80, 40, 15 and 10-meter CW allocations at up to 200 W output. The panel suggested setting aside portions of those bands for "slow CW operation" to aid new CW operators in enhancing their skills. The committee recommended re-farming the current Novice/Tech Plus sub-bands in part to allow expansion of the phone allocations on 80, 40 and 15 meters.
The committee's complete report will be presented to the ARRL Board of Directors for consideration during its annual meeting in January. The committee's determinations were based on opinions expressed by 4744 respondents to an ARRL Novice Spectrum Study survey launched in June. Those expressing their opinions included ARRL members and nonmembers. Nearly 61% of those responding were Extra class licensees. The committee, chaired by ARRL International Affairs Vice President Rod Stafford, W6ROD, has been studying the status and usage of the Novice/Technician Plus HF bands with an eye toward determining what changes to usage of that spectrum might be needed now that the FCC no longer issues new Novice licenses. The survey offered possible re-farming options for each of the bands involved--including no change at all. Generally speaking, the predefined options proposed retaining Extra class CW sub-bands on the affected bands, setting aside expanded CW reserves for all license classes except Technicians lacking Element 1 credit, and dividing the remaining spectrum into expanded phone segments for General, Advanced and Extra class operators. A guiding principle was that no class of licensees would lose any privileges as a result of re-farming. FROM ARRL NEWSLETTER

ANTENNA MODELING IS NEXT ARRL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM OFFERING

Building upon the success of its emergency communication courses, the ARRL Certification and Continuing Education (C-CE) Program will offer an on-line course in computerized antenna

modeling. Program Coordinator Dan Miller, K3UFG, said the new course will open for registration soon. "This course is designed to assist students in mastering the art and science of antenna modeling using computer software," Miller said. The course was developed by L.B. Cebik, W4RNL, and course content was edited by ARRL Senior Assistant Technical Editor (and antenna guru) Dean Straw, N6BV. At least initially, the antenna modeling course will be offered once per month for up to 50 registrants. The course is scheduled to take 12 weeks to complete. The fee will be $80 for ARRL members and $120 for nonmembers.
FROM ARRL NEWSLETTER

Reprinted from *The Best of Beasley* by Robert Beasley, K6BJH, published by WORLDRADIO BOOKS (with a small liberty taken for VOMARC)

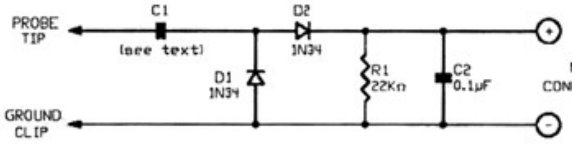


C'MON IN---WE WERE JUST DISCUSSING THE RELATIVE MERITS OF THE OLD RIBBON MICROPHONE VERSUS THE ELECTRET MIKE !

An Improved Diode Probe Design
By Dave Fifield, AD6A
Reprinted from QRPp Fall 2001

Many of you constructors/tinkerers will have used a simple diode probe to test for the presence of RF signals in your newly built homebrew/kit radio. Several kits have single diode RF probe circuits built into them to make life easier for the constructor (for example, the Wilderness Sierra and the Red Hot 20). However, all of these RF diode probe detector circuits suffer from the disadvantage that they are only half-wave rectifiers. As such, they are only about half as sensitive as they could be. With the addition of another diode, most of these half-wave detectors can be converted into full-wave detectors with a subsequent boost in sensitivity. The circuit of a simple full-wave diode probe RF detector is presented below. This is about as simple as you can make it. For HF use, the input capacitor (C1) should be 100pF. For VHF, make it 10pF. The GND clip lead and the input probe lengths should be kept to a minimum for best performance and minimum affect on the circuit being
measured. Although for best sensitivity the use of a modern digital multimeter to measure the DC voltage at the output of the detector is best (as they have a very high input resistance) for most ham applications, such as tuning up a transmitter bandpass filter, it is much easier to use an analog multimeter. If you do use an analog meter, make sure it is a good one with an input resistance of at least 20KOhm

per volt otherwise the diode probe sensitivity will be too low to be of any use.



Note the use of germanium diodes in the diode probe circuit. These have a forward voltage drop of about O.3V. The use of silicon signal diodes is not recommended (e.g. 1 N914, 1 N4148) as they have a much higher forward voltage drop of about O.lV. If you can find them, feel free to use some Schottky barrier diodes (or hot carrier diodes as they are sometimes called). These have a forward voltage drop of only about O.2V or O.25V depending on type. Of course, there are other improvements that can be made, such as the inclusion of an op-amp to remove the diode's forward voltage drop and linearize the output. These can be the subject of another short article in a future edition of QRPp.

Learning CW, Tips
Steve Todd, K2IYQ

You want to upgrade your license and have a computer. So, what do you do to master that 5 WPM CW ? Well, you can try one of the many CW programs that are available.
Personally, I like the Super Morse program. It allows multiple ways to practice and learn and it is shareware (mostly free). It will also run QSO’s and random text for you to copy. This and several other programs are available through a terrific web site at WWW.AC6V.COM on the World Wide Web.
When attempting to learn the code, there are a few things you can do that will make it easier to master.
First, always hear each character at 18 wpm. Space the characters at 5 wpm and word spacing at 5 wpm.
Second, learn the numbers 1 through 0 (zero) FIRST. Then, work on the punctuation and Prosigns. Last thing is the alphabet.
Why do it this way? Well, the numbers are all the same duration and have an easy repeating pattern. They also seem to be about twice as long as alphabetic characters. This means that you will have to listen for a fixed time period and that will condition you to listen long enough to hear a whole character when the shorter alpha characters are being sent.
One of my biggest problems with CW had always been that for numbers or Prosigns, I would hear 2 alphabetic characters since I wasn’t listening long enough. I literally had to relearn the code in order to be able to copy numbers, punctuation and Prosigns.
Learning the Morse Code is easier now that only 5 WPM receiving is required for license upgrade. It will only take about 10 to 15 minutes of practice each day for you to be ready to take the test at the VOMARC Hamfest in April this year. So start today. If you need some

help, contact Steve, K2IYQ, or join the class that we will soon start.

Have you Renewed?

I have checked the club membership records very carefully and find that only 19 people have renewed their membership for 2002. To assist you, I printed your membership expiration date on the address label.
Now, even though I have scrutinized the database closely, there is the possibility that I have not recorded a payment that you sent. So, if I have made a mistake, please let me know. Otherwise, I am waiting for a flood of mail with renewal checks.
Your label looks something like this:

12/31/01
Steve Toad, K2IYQ
18958 Carillo Court
Sonoma, CA 95476

The date is the upper right is your expiration date. If yours is less than xx/xx/02, it's time to renew.
TNX es 73, Steve, K2IYQ

NOTE: VE session for the year are scheduled for February 9, April 27, the Hamfest, August 10, and November 16. Remember to mark your calendars and let's get those new hams to these test sessions!

The VOMARC WIRELESS

VOLUME 6 EDITION 1

A publication of the Valley of the Moon Amateur Radio Club – W6AJF

Frank C. Jones – W6AJF
Honorary President in Perpetuity

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Jim Hill, K6UUW – President
Millard Fillmore, W2PDQ – Vice Pres.
Joan Brady, W6WXU – Secretary
Steve Todd, K2IYQ – Treasurer
Gerhard Straub, K6XH – Radio Officer
Ken McTaggert, N6KM – Club Trustee
Steve Todd, K2IYQ – Membership Chair
Darrel Jones, WD6BOR - Editor

Receipt of the Wireless is one of the most sought after benefits of membership in VOMARC.

CLUB MEETINGS are held on the third Wednesday of each month in McDougal Hall at the Sonoma Developmental Center, 15000 Arnold Drive, Eldridge. Meetings start at 19:30 local.

Nets are held every Wednesday night at 19:30 local, except meeting nights on the 145.350 repeater, -600, PL 88.5 Hz.

ACS holds a net each Monday evening at 19:30 local on the 146.205, +600, PL 88.5 Hz repeater.

PACKET STATION INFO: The VOMARC packet station is on 144.910 as "SNV1EC". "SNVGW" can be used as a gateway digipeating on 223.66 MHz. The node name is "SNVND".

CLUB BREAKFASTS are held on the first Saturday of each month at Denny's Restaurant, 18999 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma. The fun starts at 09:30 local.

Comments and submissions of material may be sent to:

WD6BOR@VOM.COM or
K6UUW@VOM.COM or
K2IYQ@VOM.COM

Valley of the Moon ARC, Inc.
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Sonoma, CA 95476

Valley of the Moon ARC
18958 Carillo Court
Sonoma, CA 95476

NEXT MEETING IS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16 AT 7:30 P.M. AT SDC
SEE YOU THERE!

VOMARC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

VOMARC 2002 Membership Dues: $10/year individual; $5/year family member
ARRL Membership Dues: $31/year; Over 65, $25/year; Family, no QST, $5/year.

Name: _____ CALL: _____

Name: _____ CALL: _____

Name: _____ CALL: _____

Name: _____ CALL: _____

VOMARC: $ _____ARRL: $ _____TOTAL: $ _____

Make your check payable to: **VOMARC –** 18958 Carillo Court, Sonoma, CA 95476-5570

Time to RENEW your membership for 2002!